



Discovery 2000 Today!

ISSUE NUMBER FOUR

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 14, 2000

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE GENERAL CONFERENCE

September 11 - 15, 2000

St. Louis, Missouri

E X P E R I E N C E



Y O U R A M E R I C A

Angelou Wows Crowd



Maya Angelou admonished, cajoled, and encouraged NPS employees at the opening session of Day Three of *Discovery 2000*. "You are the rainbow in the cloud," she said at the beginning and end of the 40-minute performance.

The analogy, she said after singing an old spiritual about the worst of times and the possibility of seeing light, lends itself to the National Park Service because it "provides places of relief... relaxation... moments... to flirt... to get to know a tree."

"It was stirring," said Gary Candelaria, superintendent of Wrangell-St. Elias. "She said all of us have been bought and paid for—we are redeemed... for others to see themselves. "Angelou spoke of looking for courage, for without it we cannot be consistent in our other virtues." "She fired up the brain," Bryan Swift from Intermountain Region.

Angelou exhorted the crowd with poetry, humor and song in a presentation that

stretched her often careful and full-toned voice to levels of a squeaky "culture lady" to the husky deep throated song of her mother and grandmother.

"Read African American poetry," she challenged. "It is rich, beautiful, rarely taught, so little cherished and is credited with saving at least one group of people."

She challenged park employees to put at least four lines of poetry in our parks, to write it, read it, and memorize it for its uplifting qualities.

Her presentation led the audience through the full spectrum of emotions, quickly moving from the dark moments of her life, to the encouragement from her mother to read poetry for renewal, to laughter, when she recited "My woman's fat and, chocolate to the bone, and when she shakes, a thin woman loses her home."

Angelou's storytelling about her life with poets as varied as the 19th century African-American Ann Spencer, William Shakespeare, Edna St. Vincent Millay, and Edgar Allen Poe, whom she privately calls "Eap," caused rustling along the back row of the hall as participants reached for journals.

Marv Jensen of the Fort Collins air quality office offered "This is the best so far. It stirred you to be thoughtful in context with the rest of the world."

"I loved it," Floretta Daniel of the Southeast Region commented after the event. "She was telling us to tell the real story, not leave anything out, embrace it...especially now with the education [strategy]. It means... embracing everything."

T H U R S D A Y

L E A D E R S H I P

8:00 a.m. Leadership Opening Plenary
Keynote Address by Dr. Peter M. Senge

10:05 a.m. Break

10:30 a.m. Leadership Sessions

12 Noon Lunch

1:00 p.m. Leadership Sessions

2:30 p.m. Break

3:00 p.m. Leadership Closing Plenary
Address by James Lee Witt

BASEBALL NIGHT IS HERE!



6:30 p.m. Baseball night at Busch Stadium - St. Louis Cardinals vs. the Chicago Cubs

Those with tickets can take a shuttle. Buses will depart all hotels beginning at 6 p.m. and run continuously to Busch Stadium until 8 p.m. Buses return to hotels beginning at 9:30 p.m. and will stop no later than 11 p.m.

VIRTUAL VISITS

Wyndeth Davis from WASO and Shirley Smith of SERC, a distance learning organization, opened a workshop on "virtual visits" to national parks with an overview of programs they developed that permitted students to visit Katmai and Wrangell-St. Elias.

They began emphasizing how many people can be reached by a suite of electronic technologies to make such visits possible. Over 800,000 students worldwide registered for the visit to Wrangell-St. Elias, and 2,000,000 for the trip to Katmai.

The heart of the presentation focused on how to develop programs:

- Build a production team, which normally includes a video crew, web site operators, and people who can provide guidance on applicability to school curricula.
- Begin with content: What's unique about the park? What's the 'journey' that students will take? How will the program be used in the classroom?
- Visits can be made through more than one type of media.
- Registration permits identification of participants, which in turn helps evaluate programs.
- Always a challenge, but there is funding. Although some programs can be relatively costly for small parks, the cost-effectiveness is very high due to the number of viewers.

During the subsequent discussion, participants raised a number of points:

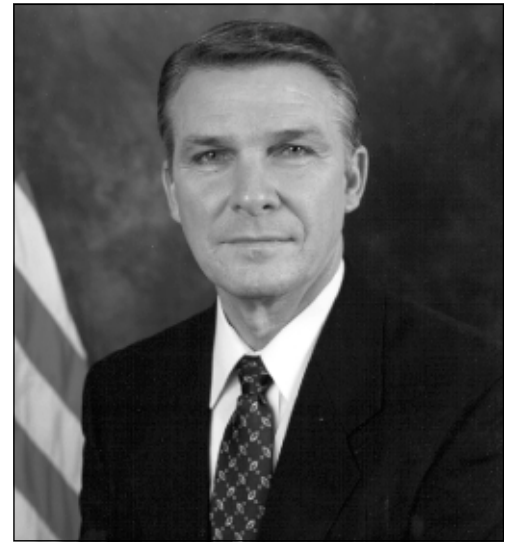
- Access is less of an issue than it used to be, as most schools have web and satellite access.
- Schools are so "hungry" for these types of programs that they'll work hard to get them.
- Cable channels like videos and use them over and over due to their popularity.

Today's Speakers Champion Leadership

Peter M. Senge will give this morning's keynote address. Dr. Senge has lectured extensively throughout the world. His areas of special interest focus on decentralizing the role of leadership in organizations to enhance productivity.

He is the author of the widely acclaimed book, *The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of The Learning Organization*. Dr. Senge, the Senior Lecturer at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, has worked with leaders in business, education, health care and government.

The closing plenary address features James Lee Witt, director of the Federal Emergency Management Agency. His agency coordinates the response and recovery activity of 28 federal agencies and departments and many volunteer organizations. Witt reorganized FEMA into a pro-active, consumer-focused agency President Clinton has recognized as a model for successful government.



FEMA Director James Lee Witt

Prior to joining the federal service in 1993, Witt ran his own construction firm, served as a county court judge, and headed the Arkansas Office of Emergency Services.

Distance Learning Promises and Pitfalls Examined

The long-term vision for distance learning and the use of technology to reach millions of people who do not get to parks was described as both a goal of great potential and one that brings significant questions.

In a session featuring former NPS Director Jim Ridenour, Jim Boyd of the Albright Training Center, and Dennis Reidenbach from Independence National Historical Park, participants heard of several evolving distance learning projects using the Web, voice and television conferencing, and traditional paper correspondence. Projects included those at Everglades, in Alaska, and Gettysburg.

There was no disagreement voiced on the premise that the Park Service needs to expand those efforts to reach both employees with training information and the public. Speaking of urban schoolchildren, Ridenour noted "some of these kids have literally never set foot on grass." To

win their support as they become adults and voters, "we have to get in to their heads."

Where to find money, especially at small parks, was a question voiced by several members of the audience. Both the entry costs to acquire the technology and the technical expertise needed, and the maintenance cost to upgrade equipment in a quickly changing computer landscape were seen as potential barriers.

Ridenour suggested the audience consider the sale of products related to education, and to partner with media outlets for the production of programming. Reidenbach asked, "What about Web advertisements? To get the money for education, is that something we as a Service are looking for? Do we set ourselves apart as pure when it is happening elsewhere? That may be an issue we have to struggle with over the next 10 years."

A Crystal Ball Look Into the Future of the National Parks

A short recitation of the proud history of education in the national parks by John Reynolds served as the kick-off for a look into the future. Speaking to a standing room only crowd, the Pacific Western Regional Director reminded us "education is the tool through which so many NPS goals can be reached."

Self-avowed futurist and University of Idaho professor Dr. Gary Machlis provided an entertaining, enlightening and somewhat frightening view of the present and the future of the Service.

Using an 8-track tape to demonstrate futurists are fallible, Dr. Machlis forged ahead with advice on how NPS managers can deal with anticipated changes and their impacts on the parks.

He sees four skills necessary for dealing with the future:

- * serve as a disenchanted observer,
- * base decisions on sound theory,
- * have access to a broad array of data, and
- * read as voraciously as possible.

Machlis used a variety of colorful stories about such subject as Coke, classical music

and Viagra to engage the audience as he sold them his ideas.

Building upon that base, Dr. Machlis moved on to dealing with three trends: convergence, acceleration, and accumulation. It's his theory that we are in a "war of information and communication" in a world that moves at an increasingly faster pace as we deal with the garbage of the past.

Machlis referred to the booklet *A Look Ahead...* to illustrate anticipated changes that could dramatically impact the future of the National Park Service.

Dr. Machlis sees a need to provide backcountry-quality experiences in the front country areas in order to protect fragile cultural and natural resources. He recommends we plan now for an older, more diverse, and increasingly international group of visitors. Machlis also advocates visitor services and educational approaches which recognize the blurring distinction between parks and classrooms.



Park ranger Warren Kasper reveals the story of Dred Scott in the Old Courthouse Building.

N E W S

Bridging the Gap

A panel of retirees and Gen-X NPS employees will convene at noon today in the Mississippi Room for a lively session to bridge the generations. Participants include Jim Coleman, Boyd Evison, Brian Carlstrom, Gillian Bowser, Holly Shapless and others. Bring your lunch and enjoy!

Smokies Supt. Named

Michael Tollefson, a 27-year veteran of the NPS, has been named as the new superintendent at Great Smoky Mountains National Park. He will assume his duties there in early October. Tollefson comes to the job from five years as superintendent of Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks. During his time in California, Tollefson directed the restoration of the Giant Forest Sequoia Grove, which involved 282 buildings, a million square feet of asphalt and the development of new hotel facilities outside the grove.

Become a Mentor

Are you interested in sponsoring or being a mentor to a "sustainability circle" training program (similar to Toastmasters)? The program will bring a common vision about sustainability, biological diversity and the quality of life on the planet. Leave a note at the Registration Desk in the "Sustainability Circle" box or cc:Mail Maia Browning, Shawn Norton or Marcia Keener.

Quiet Riot Advice

Four qualities of a creative and flourishing park or team:

- Belonging, the Dalang, you as a story teller.
- Fun, creative play leads to discovery.
- Choice, provided by diversity.
- Respect, knowing your power and the unique contribution of others, e.g. Rosa Parks.



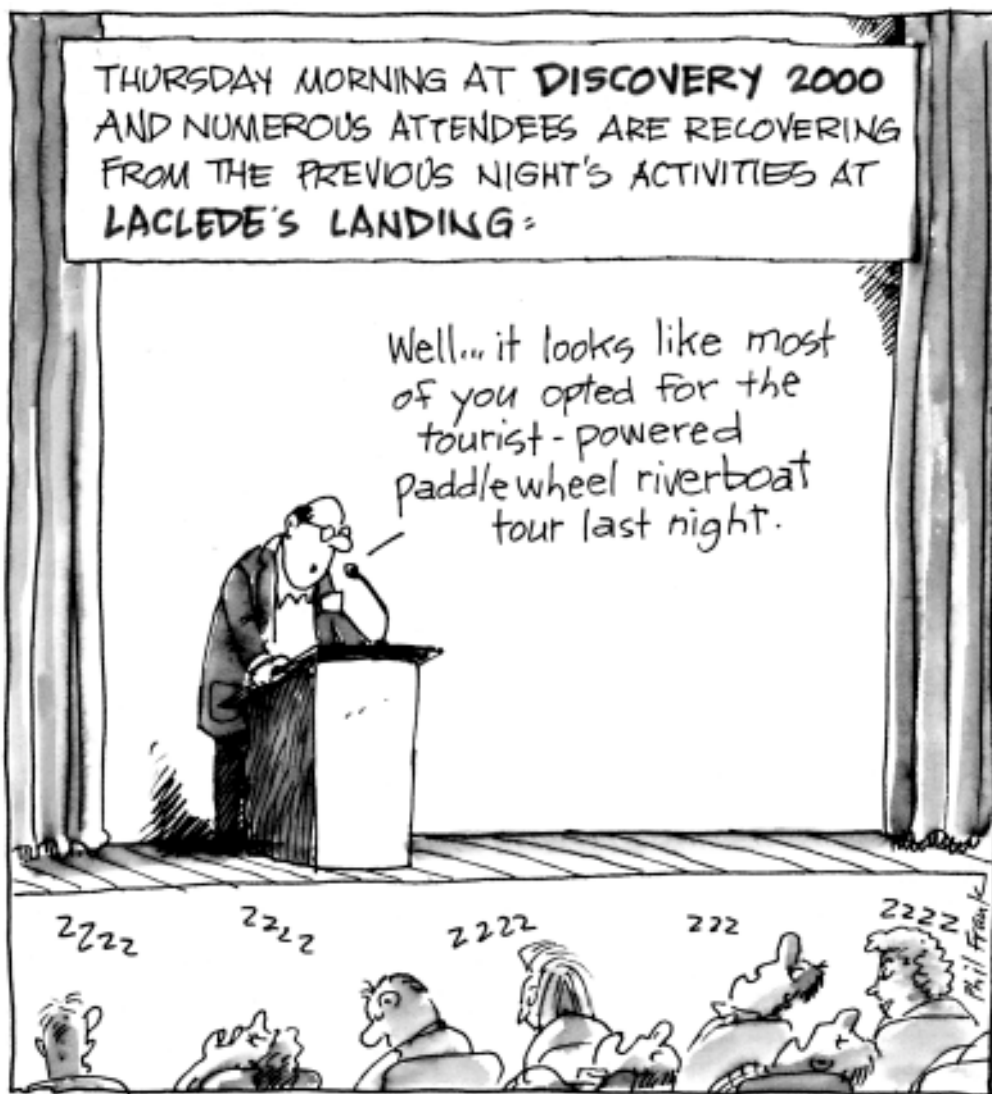
EXPERIENCE
YOUR
AMERICA

The National Park Service cares for special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage.



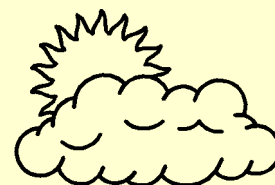
Far from their home in Cape Hatteras, Gayle Johnson-Peltier and her daughter Joy enjoy a quiet moment reading during Discovery 2000.

• Q U I T E F R A N K L Y •



THURSDAY'S WEATHER

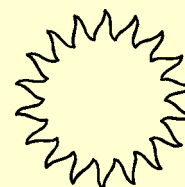
September 14, 2000



Cloudy, clearing, and breezy. High 78. Clear and cool Thursday night, low 53.

FRIDAY'S WEATHER

September 15, 2000



Continued clear and cool with a high around 70 degrees.

Time Capsule Excerpts:

We become members of a seamless system of parks and outdoor recreation providers...

NPS views itself as a spirited champion of wilderness.

We are a battleground of competing good ideas.

Award "teamwork."

Leaders should listen to ideas from all levels before forming an opinion.

While we should "reflect" America in our sites, our core mission should not change to match changing demographics.

